ISSUE 22

WRESTLING THEN & NOW

11-91

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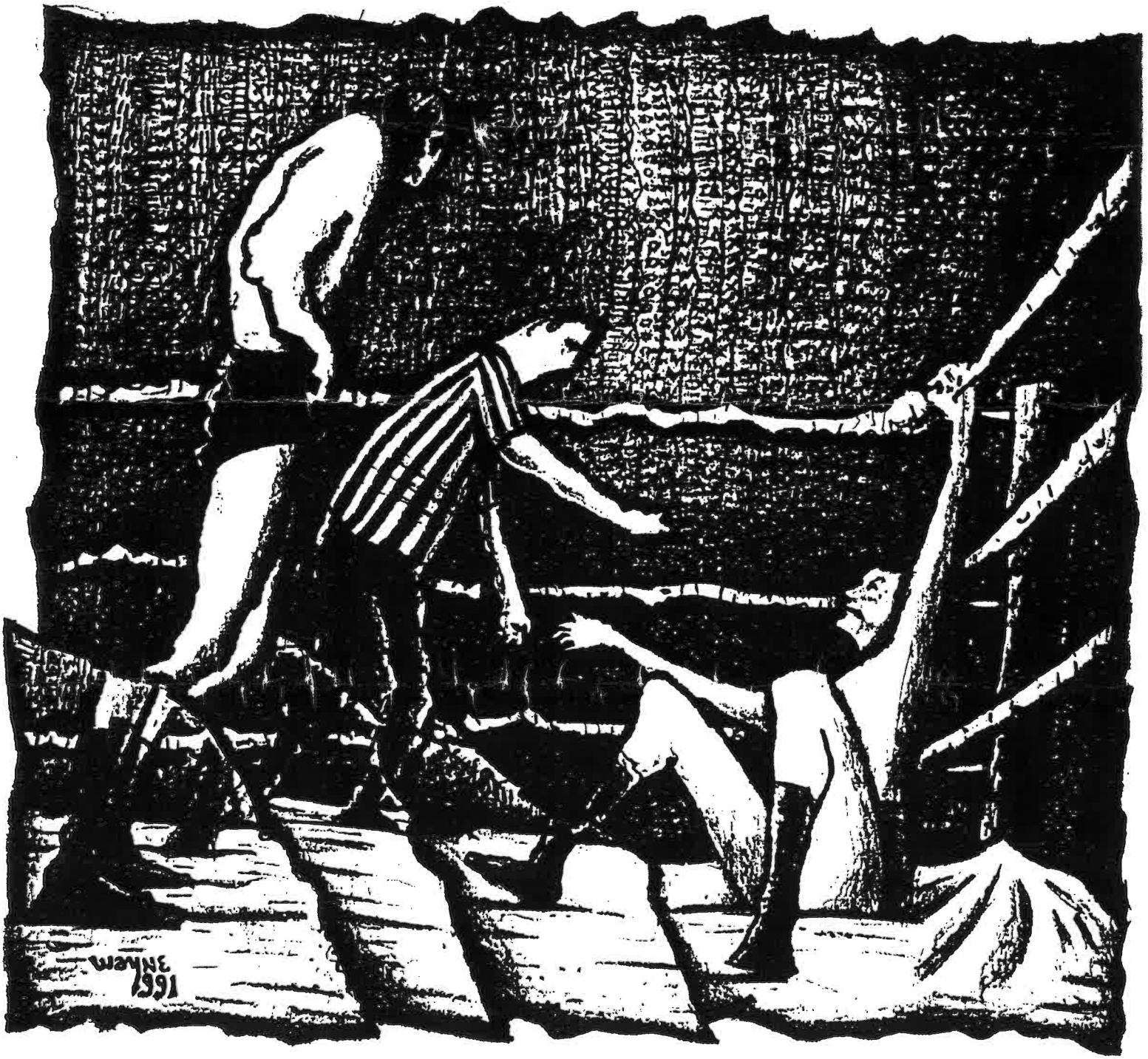

PAT O'CONNOR VS. GENE KINISKI
ST. LOUIS- 1970

BY: WAYNE ST. WAYNE

THE EDITOR'S SPACE: BY EVAN GINZBURG

Sometimes I feel like a guest in my own sheet! With all the articles, letters and gorgeous artwork pouring in, I often find myself hiding on page 9, but figured this time it would be a bit more personal to "say hello" and thank both my readers and contributors for their support right off the top!

A big welcome goes out to two new staff members- Wayne St. Wayne (an indie wrestler/manager, artist and poet! How's that for eclectic!?) who supplied the art this issue and promises to be a regular contributor. My long-time buddy Mike Einhorn also debuts in a quirky, offbeat column. And I'm also delighted to say that Gary Fishman's back from the blink of oblivion with a new piece for us.

Special thanks to all of the following for helping make my recent California/Vegas/Mexico trip so memorable: Mike Einhorn and the entire mighty Einhorn clan, Verne Langdon of Slammers Wrestling Gym (an interview appears in an upcoming issue), Scott Cole, Billy Anderson, Marc Rubin, "Potshot" Bill Kunkel, Steve Gerber, and Dan Farren & Kurt Brown of the Viva La Lucha newsletter ($2 to Kurt Brown at PO Box 9401 Brea Ca. 92622). The ad on the bottom of pg. 3 is from the promotion Kurt wrestles with and I detail the card in both Arena Report and Cassette Wrestling News. Great action- check these guys out!!!

On the non-wrestling front, I recently had the thrill of catching Washington go-go master Chuck Brown in a rare NY gig. In case you're not hip to go-go, it's this wild combination of R&B, Jazz, Rap and everything else you can imagine- heavy on horns & percussion- tunes go on for over an hour without stop. Happy, happy music- a joyful noise!!! Also sorry to hear about the loss of Miles Davis one of the true legends of modern music. Video picks for the WT&N crew- Blood Diner which featues a bizarre cannibalistic wrestling sequence (Psychotronic fans will love it!), Piper's Hell Comes To Frogtown (surprisingly lame action but good fun), and been catching up on some early Jackie Chan flicks available for only $5.99 at your video outlets (a steal!). Action lovers take note.

WT&N's growing at an incredible pace and I am truly grateful for your support. Always remember, this is YOUR newsletter. You are welcome to contribute to any of our columns & we want your feedback as well!

Meanwhile, please tell a friend to tell a friend about WT&N. And of course, enjoy...

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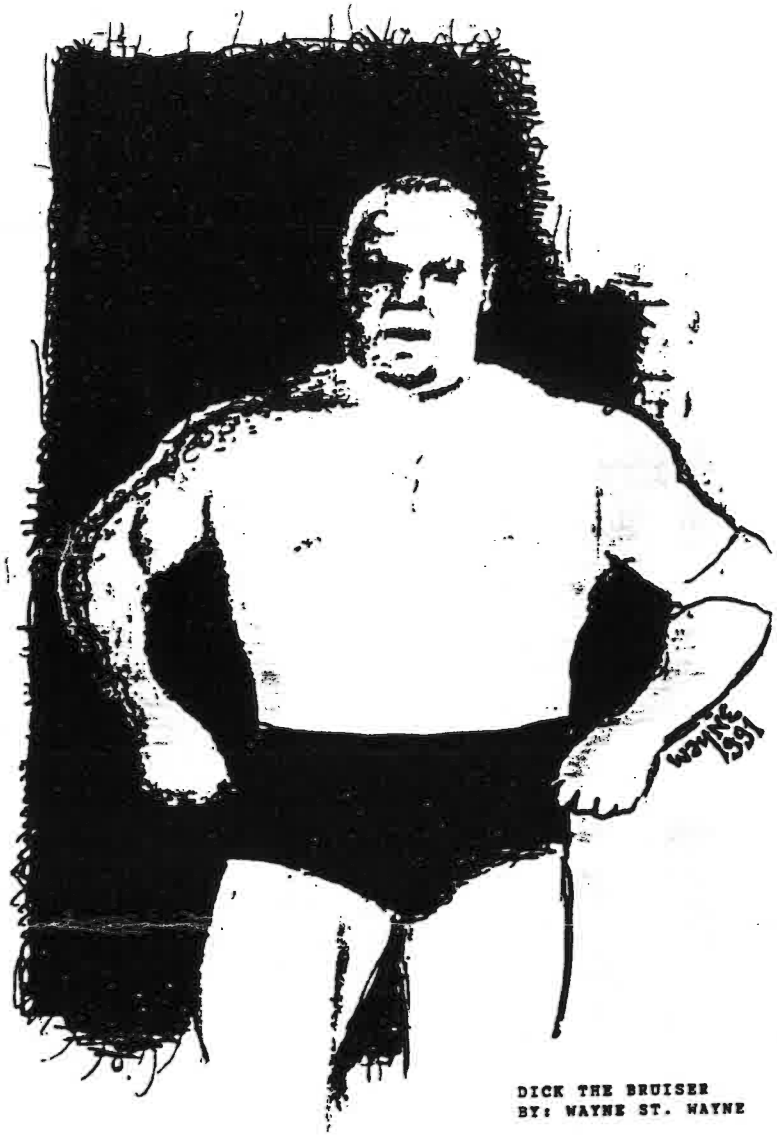


DICK THE BRUISER
BY: WAYNE ST. WAYNE

LETTERS TO WT&N

I must disagree with Harry White's assessment of himself as NOT being a wrestling historian. Anyone who remembers the pre-1984 era, especially if from St. Louis, is a wrestling historian to some degree. With the emphasis on history and tradition in the presentation of wrestling here, one could not help but learn. These ties to the past were reaffirmed every week on TV and at every Kiel Auditorium card. One would be amazed at how strong this education remains today. I can not get involved in a converstation about wrestling without some star or match from the past being brought up. This education made for a strong following of fans that still love and respect Sam Muchnick- nearly 10 years after his retirement. Yes you are a historian, Harry. Just as all of us in the hardcore community are wrestling historians. We keep the traditions alive in this era of denying the past.

Harry's article about faces being heels for only one night (Editor's note: See issue #18- E.G.) struck a chord in my memory. I remember attending a card in St. Louis on November 15, 1974 when Jack Brisco defended the NWA World title against Dory Funk, Jr. Brisco played a subtle heel as the match wore on, ending with him being the heel openly and getting disqualified by referee Lou Thesz. Earlier that same year, I had seen Brisco defend the title against Bobo Brazil and he had been the subtle heel here. Both times the crowd really let Jack have it. I remember my Dad saying that the champion gets desperate sometimes and will do anything to keep the title. Until this point, Brisco had been my hero, but now I began to look at him quite differently. This triggered my slow conversion to becoming a fan of Harley Race and rooting for some of the heels.

Here is my renewal for the next six months, Evan. I really have enjoyed WT&N and look forward to receiving it every month. For the reasons stated, wrestling history is important. I find it quite sad that present day wrestling choses to ignore its past so much.

MICHAEL MCBOWEN
JERSEYVILLE, IL

A couple of comments if you will indulge me. The WWF card you gave away your seats for was pretty much what you expected with Hogan vs. Slaughter being great, but not much else; don't worry I didn't pay- saw it on MSG Cable. I was thrilled to see the return of the "unbeatable" Dino Bravo! Maybe now I'll get to see my dream match- Bravo vs. Haku (no action allowed beyond their specialty- psych-out by breath-taking, death-defying stalling)!

I enjoyed your "5 great things to yell as the arenas" immensely. I remember at Brooklyn's Gleason's Arena about a year ago, a couple of fans started a great chant, "Go back to Romania!" The match: Romanian Warrior vs. Cuban Savage.

It didn't end there; the Cuban Savage fell victim to a move outlawed in 7 states- the snap-mare! He lost his wig (fake hair made him look like Afa), turned a legit-red and ran back to the dressing room! The NCW card drew 175 people (more than WCW!) and was highlighted by a successful title defense by Nico & Mico- The Rhino Power (would maul the Steiners) against The Russian (creative) and The Beast (as over as at the Penta) and Johnny Rodz regaining the title from veteran Davey O'Hannon.

In Garmouth, England I remember seeing a wrestler by the name of "The Great Scott" (only thing great was his girth!) get jeered in a unique form: "Go home ya bum" sung to the tune of Ueld Lang Syne- a Scotting folk song sung at New years! Anyway, thanks for a great publication.

Pray for Johnny Rodz as WCW booker.

GORDON SCOZZARI
BROOKLYN, N.Y.

MORE LETTERS AND ART ON PAGE 9!!! KEEP THOSE CARDS AND LETTERS COMING WT&N READERS!!!

IRON MIKE EINHORN- "KING OF MEN"

This column is just going to be observations and reflections on my thirty years of watching wrestling as well as life in general...

I'm a former New Yorker now living in San Diego who s into wrestling, photography, David Letterman and Springsteen...I have cat-like quickness, the strength of 10 men, and am as fertile as a Kansas cornfield after an April rain...I'm basically a nervous person- I have pressure on a hammock...I got an ear infection from phone sex...One of my prized possesions is a valuable watch that my grandfather SOLD me on his deathbed...I once went out with a girl who didn t talk through the entire dinner and wore a ton of make-up. Turns out she was a mime...My cholesterol level s higher than my SAT scores...

But seriously folks...

My first memories of wrestling were watching Ray Morgan on WNEW from Washington, D.C. which was where I saw Haystacks Calhoun, Miguel Perez, The Giant Baba, The Golden Terror, Argentina Apollo (who wrestled like Antonino Rocca), Dr. Bill Miller and the Fabulous Kangaroos. The very first wrestler I remember was a big black guy named Sailor Art Thomas who wore a sailor's cap. I'll never forget Gene Kiniski slapping Bruno Sammartino on an interview with Morgan. Another great memory was Bill Watts, Bruno's partner, turning on him. I also loved seeing Red Berry hitting the Kanagaroo's opponents with his ever-present cane. Fred Blassie at the time regularly appeared on Joey Bishop's show when Regis Philbin was Joey's sidekick. Later on Blassie would appear on Regis' cable show many, many times. I loved reading about Lou Thesz, Vern Gagne and all the greats in Wrestling Revue every month, but due to the regional nature of the business at the time we unfortunately never got to see these champions live.

One day my father's friend told me wrestling wasn't on the "up and up" and it was tantamount to discovering there was no Easter Bunny or Santa Claus and my parents were really the tooth fairy. Wrestling, however, was part of growing up (like the New York Yankees!). At the 1964 World's Fair, Schaeffer Bear would have sports celebrities appear and Bruno was the largest draw!

A few miscellaneous thoughts...

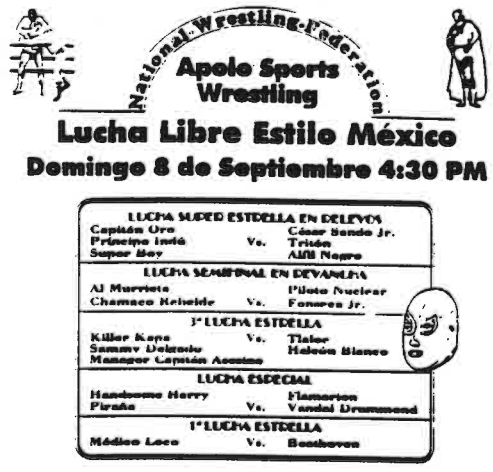
From what medical school did Dr. D. David Schultz get his degree from?...If someone gave PN News a hug they'd be in another time zone...Did you know that if the Fabulous Moolah married Abdullah the Butcher, she'd be Moolah Abdullah?...Did you know Bruno Sammartino was once champ?

Finally, here's a challenging "Brain Teaser" for you. Match the wrestling father with the wrestling son. Answers in next month's edition:

GENE KINISKI	MIKE GRAHAM
EDDIE GRAHAM	KELLY KINISKI
DUSTY RHODES	GREG GAGNE
VERNE GAGNE	DUSTIN RHODES

"Expert Scale": All 4 Correct- Get A Life
3 Correct- Lobotomy long overdue
1-2 Correct- Reading skills minimal at best
0 Correct- Get a life too

In parting, remember that this column answers the question: "Is there entertainment in Hell?"



THE RETURN OF THE FISHMAN: BY GARY FISHMAN

I would like to start by thanking Adam Horovitz for the nice things he wrote about me in the last issue. I find it very touching that Adam hasn't washed his stomach since the day he accidently bumped bellies with Boris Zukoff in Staten Island. You can read all about it in his upcoming article entitled "My greatest thrill in wrestling."

I would also like to thank Rodney Leighton for the kind words he wrote about Wrestling- Then & Now recently in his newsletter. We wish to thank him for his loyal support.

Evan told me that many of you have written in saying how much you missed my column the last few months. My problems is I appeal to everyone who can do me absolutely no good...

Vince McMahon has a goldmine in the Flair-Hogan angle if he does it right. I predict that WCW will not survive another year. Just a few years ago I spent about $100 a month to travel to NWA matches and I don't travel 30 minutes to the Meadowlands to see them. I can't get into 8 minute matches no matter how good they are. Unless the NWA Comes up with something super hot, which I don't think has happened since the Nikita Koloff turn years ago, they are doomed no matter how much money gets thrown into them. While there are still bright spots, like Scott Steiner& Cactus Jack, there are a host of wrestlers who seem to have lost much of their steam at a relatively young age (Windham, Anderson and Eaton just a few years ago were 3 of the 15 best wrestlers I had ever seen)...I don't think even Cowboy Bill could save them now.

I am still looking for copies of Georgia programs circa 1974...I have to admit that Evan's new job seems permanent this time. I still can't figure out how he stuffs those little cardboard rolls into the middle of the toilet paper...Evan has put more pictures in his bulletin so that people who can't read the reduced print can follow along...

THE LISTENING POST BY: EVAN GINZBURG

When I began doing this sheet, my friends, most of whom are non-wrestling fans, all gave me the same advice. "Don t write on too high a level" they told me. "You'll lose too many of them." I strongly disagreed, and am glad that I did. Having been doing this sheet for almost two years now, I've gotten to know many interesting fans from around the world. They have broadened my horizons, enriched my life, and have also gotten me thinking about the "social stigma" attached to being a fan. Anyone who loves wrestling as much as we hardcores have at some point heard such comments as "You REALLY like that stuff?" in a condescending, almost incredulous manner. If you are like me, you probably wince and distance yourself from the Hulk Hogans, birds, costumes and everything else the non-fan associates today's "action" with. You may even catch yourself defending the sport. Comments like "That's not really wrestling- some of these guys really are GREAT athletes" usually result in "non-believers" smirking at each other. You can bet your life they're not listening to a word you're saying, and when they change the subject you're most likely glad they did.

There's also more involved than just the embarassment caused by the WWF and even recently WCW. Wrestling simply has never been geared towards the "intelligentsia". It has a "blue-collar" reputation and appeal, and coming from a grandfather who was a butcher and a father that was a cabbie, those are certainly my roots as well. Yet the concept that "blue-collar" equals "unintelligent" is so off base as to be absurd. My father was a cab driver for 25 years and carried around a degree of shame as he seemed to feel it was not a career that an educated/intelligent man should pursue. Yet NOBODY felt that way about him, and as much as both he and my mother enjoyed wrestling, they also loved theatre, film, music and instilled these passions in me as well. That Vince McMahon, Jim Herd and others "talk down" to the public with ridiculous gimmicks and outlandish cartoon character wrestlers only has resulted in one thing: the kiddies its geared to are eating it up in major doses, and those "blue-collar" butts are certainly no longer in those arena seats.

Hey, we're too smart for this stuff...

I'm very proud of this sheet, and have the utmost respect for my readers. Major promoters may gear their product towards the "lowest common denominator" but I don't. I can tell from those I have gotten to know that there ARE in fact more important things in their lives than the next Wrestlemania. I'm not afraid to sneak in comments about music, politics and LIFE in general. I'll never write down to my readers; there's simply no need to.

One thing that doing this bulletin has taught me is that the pitiful reputation wrestling fans have, is nothing but another in an endless list of societal prejudices. We deserve better, and I think it's very clear that with "wrestling journalism" garnering newfound respect in recent years, we're working towards improving that image.

That Wrestling- Then & Now is a small part of this change, is an honor indeed.

FRANKIE SCHROLL, THE MAN OF A THOUSAND HOLDS

BY LAURIE SULLIVAN (GRANDDAUGHTER OF FRANKIE SCHROLL)
INTRODUCTION BY MARION J. SCHROLL

I am sending WT&N this Associated Press article on Frank Schroll. He was my uncle. I would be interested in any other information on my uncle that your readers might be kind enough to furnish. My address is PO Box One Topeka, KS. 66601- M. Schroll.

Francis Anthony Schroll was not the biggest or best grappler of the Depression-era wrestling circuit.

But the Kansas farm boy with the movie star looks, a scholar's mind and a singular talent on the violin cut a distinct figure in the smoky, sweaty arenas of the 1930s- a Jay Gatsby among the Hulk Hogans.

The sport brought him riches and fame, along with the diamond-studded belt of the world light-heavyweight championship in 1936. At a time when pro wrestling's risks were real, crowds from the West Coast to Madison Square Garden cheered Frankie Schroll, "The Man Of A Thousand Holds."

Winning paid the bills and kept the chiseled body looking dapper in custom-made suits and raccoon coats. It led to friendships with the likes of heavyweight boxing champion Jack Dempsey.

And it would come to signify the glamour years in the long life of an adventurer who devoured books, traveled the world and excelled at nearly every endeavor but marriage.

"He never did want to be a farmer," said his younger brother, 88-year-old Mike Schroll, who did.

"Oh, was he smart! And a real good violinist and a real good wrestler. Just an outstanding man. If he'd stayed where he was, he would've had an easy life, made more money and wouldn't have gotten beat up so bad."

But that was not the style of Frank Schroll, the eldest of nine children whose German grandparents settled in Kansas under the Homestead Act.

He graduated from college at age 17 and became a lieutenant in the Coast Guard Artillery during World War I. The Roaring '20s found him back in Kansas City, demonstrating musical instruments and playing the violin on a daily radio program.

In his 30s in the early 1930s, devastated by a failed marriage, Frank hit the mats.

Bread lines and big bands were signs of the times when the single father from tiny Greenleaf claimed the title at the relatively sedate age of 37.

Records from the time are hard to find and memories fade. But one newspaper brief hailing the new champ noted that Frankie Schroll "came by the title by tossing Alexander Yermakoff in the semifinals of the world's title tournament."

Daughter Marceline was left on the farm to be raised by grandparents while dad toured. he took her with him only once, when she was 11, to a series of bouts in Denver.

"You have to understand that wrestling was very popular at this time in the world. It was a neat sport, not the big show it is now," she said.

"It was a very exciting atmosphere. The arenas were filled with hollering, waving fans. I saw him do drop kicks and leg holds and the whole bit. But I would get scared for him. Sometimes he did lose and he'd get bloodied and choked by opponents, and of course I didn't like that at all."

Marcie never saw much of her father but recalls many of the famous fighters he ran with and the headlines generated by his own exploits.

"He was pretty hot stuff. He was full of a love of adventure and a terrible risk-taker. He had a great mind, but he abhorred the thought of sitting at a desk or being cooped up in a building," she says.

A cartoon in one Kansas City newspaper "showed" dad standing with one foot on an opponent he'd vanquished, playing the violin."

A broken nose from a Dempsey left hook brought the wrestler and the Manassa Mauler together for the first time.

During an exhibition tour in Kansas City, Dempsey had challenged some young bucks in the local gym to spar for 10 minutes. After making short work of the first half dozen, Frankie figured Dempsey was tired.

Mike Schroll remembers the story well. Frank climbed into the ring and began pouring it on. Dempsey's one return punch found cartilage.

"Jack apologized afterward and said, "Frank, you were mixing it up a little too much; I had to cool you down." They got to be pretty good friends after that and Frank later had Dempsey referee his matches as much as he could" Schroll said.

On two occasions as referee, Dempsey became disgusted by the dirty fighting of Frank's opponents and hauled off and knocked them out himself. "When he'd do that, it would just bring the house down," Schroll said.

No one can recall if Frank lost the title or chose not to defend it, and the World Wrestling Federation which runs many of today's matches has no records of the period.

But Frankie's successes led to a South American tour, several years as a wrestling promoter and a series of USO exhibitions at the end of World War II. A second marriage to the daughter of a Buenos Aires policeman produced another daughter, Sylvia, but that union also ended in heartbreak.

By the 1950s and '60s, Frankie had long since abandoned his trunks and trademark drop kick to work briefly as a longshoreman in Southern California, then as a self-taught plumber who was part of the crew that helped turn an orange grove into Disneyland.

No opponent ever marred the handsome face. But a reckless driver crashed head-on into Frank's car in 1963, crippling the still-powerful body for good.

"It was a bad blow, a real bad blow," Marcie says. "But from a spiritual standpoint he took it very well because he always figured he'd been a pretty bad person, that he hadn't lived up to family responsibilities."

Frankie never worked again. But he lived nearly three more decades as an eccentric old man with a fighting spirit and a gift of gab that endured until his death May 15 in an Ogden nursing home at age 91.

Only a handful attended his funeral. Fighting Frank's last crowd barely filled a row.

WT&N READERS- PLEASE REMEMBER TO MAKE ALL CHECKS PAYABLE TO EVAN GINSBURG (NOT WT&N!). PLEASE CONSIDER WT&N GIFT SUBS FOR CHRISTMAS!!!

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Issue 21- Madusa interview/ICW- Savage, lady wrestlers

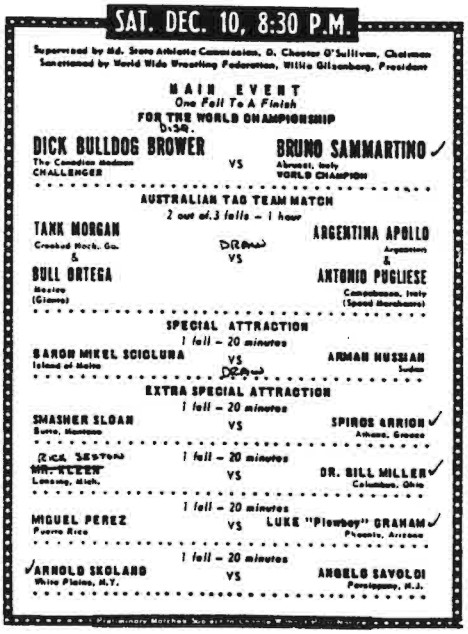
BULLDOG DICK BROWER- 40 YEARS OF MAT MAYHEM
BY DR. MICHAEL LANO

Long before the British Bulldogs or the Dog-Faced Gremlin became nicknames for modern day wrestlers, the original pit bull of wrestling, Wildman Dick "The Bulldog" Brower ruled the ring for years. And in the Tri-State independent area, promoted by Joel Goodhart and Dennis Coraluzzo, the original and greatest is returning to start trouble all over again.

But the Legend of Bulldog Brower goes back to the late 50's, when he began his career under the tutelage of former Canadian and NWA World Heavyweight Champion, the late WHipper Billy Watson and Lord Athol Layton. He was obviously schooled in all the fine points of classic scientific wrestling, but he soon became too much for Watson and Layton to keep under control. One day he bolted their school in Toronto, and got himself signed up by the local promoters. "I was a real spitfire in those days. I couldn't listen to anyone or be told to do anything. I hurt a lot of wrestlers, and actually I quite liked it. Remember I was wrestling in the Golden Era back then- so many vicious guys like the Sheik, Killer Kowalski, Dick the Bruiser Afflis, Regie the Crusher Lisowski, Golden Moose Cholak, Pampiro Firpo, the Tolos Brothers- I had to create a colorful nitch for myself. I wanted to be the raging, mad dog that bit everything in it's way. And when I got in the ring with Thesz or Gagne or any of the other tough guys I mentioned, I hurt 'em worse than they hurt me. Everyone still says I absorbed punishment better than any guy in the business ever."

When I asked him what he thought of modern day wrestling, he laughed. "These new and young guys are cream puffs. You remember few of us spent all that time in the gym working on perfect bodies. Instead we spent all our free time in the wrestling ring, training, sometimes working 3-4 shows a day to make enough money to feed our families. That's why most of the wrestlers from before the 80's could wipe anyone of these newer guys. Only a few new guys remind me of myself, or the oldtime greats. Cactus Jack is one of them- he is one of the most unbelievable guys around, taking punishment and causing riots like I used to. And also the men I manage. I've been managing Tri-States Heavyweight Champion Johnny Hot Body for the last year- and he has accomplished more wins and more titles with the Bulldog's great savvy and knowledge. He can wrestle, he can brawl, and he can definately do it all."

Brower is known for his battles mainly in the rings of Canada, Ohio and Michigan; but he also terrorized Shohei Babe and ANtonio Inoki in the 70's. He was IWA U.S. Champion for the start, until the group folded; and had amazing feuds with the Mighty Igor, Ernie Ladd, Cowboy Bob Ellis, Mil Mascaras and even Ivan Koloff. Prior to that he had turned on the WWWF like no other badguy before or since. One of the first proteges of a then young manager, Loony Lou Albano in pre-captain days; they made life miserable for champion Bruno Sammartino. "Probably one of the toughest guys I ever faced as champion-this Bulldog Brower was as wild and crazy as George Steele- but he had more of a killer instinct. He was a piece of work," said old nemesis Sammartino. At that time, Brower and Koloff set a Philly Spectrum gate record for a tag title match against the Mongols. A riot insuid and armed police had to be called in from other areas- it was that wild a match. "I remember that match- it was one of the wildest, since I picked up the fine art of biting from Freddie Blassie in Japan. I bit those two Mongols and I must've hit one in the jugular, because he never stopped bleeding. Unfortunately they disqualified us so we never got to win the titles. That kind of animalistic behavior I'm instilling in both HotBody and Chris Candido. And you know me- I'll never apologize or hesisitate to get involved in one of my guy's matches if it'll help them win! I don't need any telephones or tennis raquets or weapons. Just my Bulldog fists and teeth. You tell your readers, if they can read, that Bulldog Brower is back, biting, and better than ever!"



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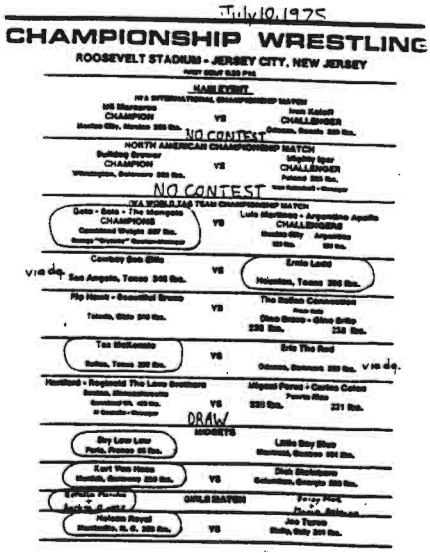

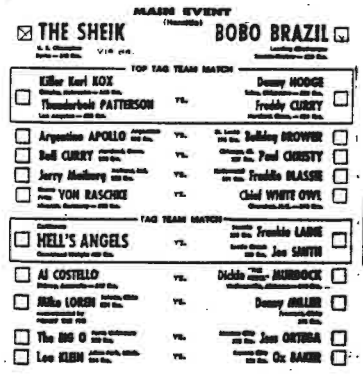

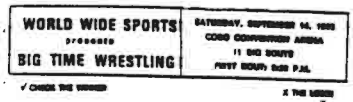

WRESTLING AND THE NUCLEAR HOLOCAUST

by Vic Stanley

Aggressive and violent forms of entertainment such as professional wrestling are crypto-fascist metaphors for nuclear war.

That's quite a mouthful, isn't it? I'm not really sure what it means, but as always, I'm more than willing to make something up. Let's start with the premise that we, as a basicly violent culture, use wrestling as a pressure relief valve to vent our societal rage in a non-violent manner. I'm sure that if this theory was explained very slowly and simply to Vince McMahon Jr., he would say "Yeah! That's the ticket!" ala Jon Lovitz' habitual liar character. Even Jr's staunchest defenders have to admit that the motives behind his exploitative angles are strictly for monetary gain rather than to provide any kind of altruistic sociological therapy. That's fine, but this moment, there is no doubt that Jr. is mourning over the fact that the Gulf War ended before Wrestlemania VII. How dare President Bush ruin his primary angle just for the sake of saving a few lives! To be quite frank, I am weary of the very mention of McMahon's name and will never again refer to the Iraqi storyline. At the same time, I am eagerly looking forward to seeing how he will top it. How about bringing Brother Love back as a Jim Jones-like character who force feeds deadly doses of steroids to the WWF wrestlers? Nope, they've already done that. Jr. needs something that works faster. But let's get back to the subject at hand.

If civilization as we know it were to end tomorrow due to a nuclear war, what would the survivors do for fun once the fallout settled? There would still be nothing good on TV. Wrestling is reputed to have been the man's earliest sport because it required no equipment and had simple rules. Since civilization would once again be starting from scratch, we could assume that wrestling would re-emerge fairly quickly. The characters of Mad Max, Lord Humongous and the Road Warriors have already been used in wrestling, so there will be no shortage of gimmicks. There will probably be a lot of freaky people like those in Total Recall who have fleshy appendages which could be used as foreign objects. Instead of green mist, some performers will be spitting up acidic bile into their opponants' faces like Alien. A wrestler utilizing this attribute could be known as the Great Mutant.

A typical post nuclear wrestling show would take place in an arena similiar to a cross between Mad Max's Thunderdome and the Roman Colosseum. Captives from rival tribes would be forced to go into mortal combat with the finest local talent. Stars such as Gryzzk the Bulbous and the inimitable Elmo the Magnificent would hold the title belts. The Mulkey Brothers would be the tag team champs. Midget and masked wrestlers would flood the market. Biting and eye gouging would be mandatory. Finishing holds would really be finishing holds. In short, wrestling would once again become a real sport. Nuclear war is a small concession for this to come about, isn't it? How else would it ever happen? Sounds awful? Well, in case you haven't noticed, wrestling is pretty awful now!

Speaking of concessions, I would want a piece of that action. Soylent Green nachos, ring rat on a stick, cockroach croissants, boneless tumor filets on a sesame seed bun...mmmmm boy. After a big show, a communal New England Fish Boil could be prepared for the ticketholders. As we all know, the boils are the tastiest part of a post nuclear fish.

In closing, how would a nuclear war change the sport of pro wrestling? Basically, it would remain unaffected. In the midst of the rubble and chaos, I would prefer to remain the eternal optimist that I am and would wake up each morning muttering to myself "It's another bright new-clear day. Nice day for going fission!"

The Top Wrestlers of 1952

JIM CLAYBOURNE—One of the three top negro wrestlers . . . Powerfully built, Jim claimed a five-year winning streak, from 1943 through '48 . . . In Europe, in 1950 and '51, he became adept at the French style, which permits use of both feet and hands.

JIM COFFIELD—A 20-year mat veteran, who switched to wrestling from driving racing cars . . . Hailing from Kansas City, he won the Missouri Valley amateur crown . . . Was taught by the great Joe Stecher.

ABE COLEMAN—Called "The Little Giant" because of his compact build (5-foot-4 and 220 pounds) . . . has been wrestling over twenty years . . . Now promotes as well as wrestles, working with Bill Johnston on his New York shows . . . Coleman's kangaroo dropkick was the result of studying the animal's antics during an Australian tour.

BOBBY COLEMAN—A good-looking, stocky athlete . . . Turned pro ten years ago, at 20, as a 175-pounder and won the Pacific Coast light-heavyweight title . . . As a wartime coastguardsman, he was in the campaigns at Eniwetok, Guam, Saipan and Okinawa . . . Has won the Texas Junior Heavyweight crown.

ROCCO COLOMBO—Billed as "The Bronx Beast," Rocco is a likeable fellow, and writes poetry on the side . . . Scales 225, although only five-foot-seven . . . learned his wrestling while in the army.

JACK CONLEY—A professional athlete since he was 13 . . . The rough Boston Irishman has made his living both boxing and wrestling . . . fought Galento, King Levinsky and Arturo Godoy as a boxer . . . As a wrestler, he employs the roughest features of both sports.

JOE CORBETT—Veteran of 12 years on the mat . . . Was a tackle on the San Francisco University football team . . . One of his mat teachers was Strangler Lewis . . . is effective with both the Oklahoma Hayride and the Irish Whip.

Don Gene Smith's:

THE DAY ART LINKLETTER MET GORGEOUS GEORGE

As a child in the mid to late 1950's, I was not very interested in my mother's favorite television programs. One particular day, however, my attention turned to the screen when I heard Art Linkletter introduce professional wrestling star Gorgeous George. I had watched a little pro wrestling at my uncle's house, and I had liked what little I had seen. I had also heard my parents talk about Gorgeous George, so I was eager to see him for myself.

Following the introduction, George slowly strutted onto the stage. He wore an elaborate robe over his wrestling trunks, and on his face he wore a look of mildly amused disdain and arrogance. "What would you like me to call you?" Linkletter asked. "You can just call me 'Gorgeous,'" the wrestler answered, primping for the camera.

As a woman "contestant" stood beside the two, Linkletter gave George a one hundred dollar bill. Linkletter then introduced a second wrestler, a babyface whose name I don't recall. The two athletes were to wrestle for a short period of time, during which the baby face was to try to take the bill from George. If the babyface could take the bill from Gorgeous George, the contestant would receive it as her winnings. On the other hand, if the baby face should fail, George would keep the bill and the woman would go away empty handed.

Then the wrestlers moved over onto a large mat, George stuffed the bill into his trunks, a bell rang, and the two began to wrestle. After a minute or so of tosses and take-downs the bell rang again and the wrestlers returned to Linkletter and the woman. When Linkletter asked for one of the men to produce the bill, George reached into his trunks saying "I was going to give it to her anyway." Suddenly, however, a look of concern and disbelief passed over George's face as he came up empty handed. "Where is it!" he cried. At that point the baby face smiled and produced the bill from his trunks, the audience cheered, and the woman went away $100 richer.

I still remember watching that short wrestling exhibition very closely, and I did not see the baby face remove any bill from George's trunks. Obviously the whole thing was a work, and the baby face had come out with a bill already in his trunks.

Sometime in the late 1970's I read in a local paper that the "original" Georgeous George was scheduled to appear as a speaker at a Christian revival meeting near Murphysboro, Illinois. Accompanying the announcement was an interview in which this "original" Gorgeous George explained how he had invented Georgie pins and other things associated with his act. If the original Gorgeous George had indeed appeared as advertised it would have been a revival meeting in more ways than one since George Wagner, the real original, had died in 1963! No, the pretender was a wrestler known as Georgeous George Grant, one of several imitators who later followed in Wagner's footsteps. I considered attending the meeting and confronting Mr. Grant with the facts, but I decided against it. What real good would I have accomplished? Anyway, truth is a plant rarely found growing in the clouded soil of professional wrestling. Some have said the same thing about the revival business.

WHEN HE WAS 12, his father was the matchmaker at Madison Square Garden and each week he would roam the garment center, slipping handbills under automobile windshield wipers and palming showcards off on the local merchants to display in their windows.

He grew up around people like Tex Rickard and Jack Dempsey and, by the time he promoted his first card — a wrestling match in Plainfield, N.J., in 1935 at age 20 — Vince J. McMahon already was wise in a business that could have broken Conan the Barbarian.

But he never pushed it. Fifteen years later, for example, when he was teamed with a couple of fellows named Toots Mondt and Charlie Johnson, who were promoting out of Washington, D.C., he devised a formula which turned the promotion of wrestling matches from a pay day into a positive gold mine.

Mondt was the old man of the combo . . . a kind of American original who had worked the old carnival circuit as part wrestler and all hustler from Homeston, Ia., to Menominee, Wis., and up into the Canadian Northwest. He would tell you with delight about Old Captain Joe, a battle-scarred champion of the free enterprise system who made his living by diving off a 95-foot ladder into eight feet of water during what carney folks called "the free show."

Capt. Joe also was king of the pickpockets and, during his routine, he would pause at the edge of the ladder, silence the drum roll and call down below:

"Ladies and gentlemen, a moment please. A message has been received that there are pickpockets among us. Would you kindly make sure your valuables are safe." Then the rubes would pat their wallets, Joe's Commandoes would check out the locations, and, as all looked above at him poised for glory, they would move through the crowd like a runaway suction pump.

Off that background, Mondt clearly was the boss in the Washington operation.

Charlie Johnson was the younger brother of another promoter named Jimmy, who was nicknamed (some say on merit) The Boy Bandit. Off that background, he was obviously the No. 2 man.

It didn't matter that it was Vince who came up with the scheme to televise wrestling out of the area where the bout was taking place, to put two of the honest wrestlers on at intermission to threaten dire things to each other and who, therefore, revolutionized the business.

But still, he was treated by the partners as "the kid." One day in the late '50s, he'd had enough. He came up to Jersey where he found a couple of fight promoters named Willie Gilzenberg and Babe Culnan and a partnership was born. They went into the Jersey City Armory with a show on the same night that Mondt and Johnson booked the Garden.

But McMahon had the hole card. He stole a fellow named Antonino Rocca away from his ex-partners and featured him as the super good guy. The armory was packed. The Garden drew only 4000. The next day, Mondt called him:

"If you want to come back, we just voted you the boss."

And he did. Utilizing Gilzenberg up north and Mondt and Johnson back in the Washington office, "the boss" moved his operation through 20 Eastern states.

The list of heroes and villains grew. From the days when he headlined the evil Count Karl Von Hess (who goose-stepped across the ring and was not above pulling a well-hidden piano wire out of his trunks in an attempt to maim and disfigure his opponent) on down to a fellow known today as The Iron Shiek (who, according to his arch enemy, Sgt. Slaughter, cannot stand to hear the chant, "U.S.A. . . . U.S.A. . . . U.S.A.") he had a fondness for the villains he helped to create and choreograph.

The heroes were legion, too, and incredibly one of them, a man named Bruno Sammartino, was, for a time, the highest paid athlete in the world with the exception of Pele.

Once, in a moment of infinite weakness, Vince McMahon reached out to tap his private unfulfilled dream. He called Gilzenberg to tell him:

"I have just signed the next lightweight champion of the world to a personal services contract. I want you to manage him. His name is Sweet Herbie Lee."

Which is how a man found himself sitting next to Gilzenberg at ringside in Baltimore where Sweet Herbie was scheduled to do battle with a guy from Syracuse who had scar tissue on his scar tissue.

After it was all over, Gilzenberg reluctantly walked to a pay phone and called McMahon.

"How did our champ do?" Vince asked.

"Who knows? I watched him for 10 rounds and he ain't thrown a punch yet."

Gilzenberg is gone now and so are Mondt and Johnson. Vince never got his fighter, but he revolutionized an industry.

He died at age 69.

RECOMMENDED NEWSLETTERS
(A.K.A. PLUG FRENZY PT. 2)

Wrestling Down Under
Chris Elsbury
PO Box 563,
Applecross WA 6153 AUSTRALIA
44 Pages(!) only $2 U.S. Funds

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David Skolnick/Paul J. MacArthur
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Joe Bob Briggs
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Send address for freebie.

New England Wrestling Scene
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The Wrestling News
Norman Keitzer
Route 1, Box 103
Vernon Center, MN 56090
$5 for sample- newspaper format

GORILLA MONSOON

A TRIBUTE TO ORVILLE BROWN

I will devote today's column to one of the true greats of all time in pro wrestling — Orville Brown.

The wrestling world lost one of its greatest champions Jan. 24 when Brown, a former world champ, died at the age of 72 in Lee's Summit, Mo.

Long before he entered the ranks of professional wrestling, Brown was a star on the rodeo circuit. He began his career when he was nine, after the death of his parents. He did odd jobs on the rodeo circuit until he reached the age of 15, when he became a performer in that grueling profession. At the age of 18 he made rodeo history when he was the first man ever to bulldog a buffalo.

When he reached the age of 20 he retired from the rodeo circuit and set himself up in business as a blacksmith in Kansas. It was while he was homesteading that he met wrestling promoter Ernest Brown (no relation). The promoter was impressed with Orville after seeing him box in a local amateur show and convinced him that he was pro wrestling material. Ernest also saw Orville coaching youngsters in the rodeo game by showing them how to bulldog steers, and was convinced he would be a future wrestling attraction.

JIMMY THE GREEK

He was not wrong. Orville gave up his business and went into training. It was not long after he made his debut in 1932 that he accepted an invitation from then-world champ, The Golden Greek Jimmy Londos, to become a sparring partner. The champion was training for his upcoming match against No. 1 challenger Everett Marshall.

What took place in the workouts upset the Greek matman to such a point he had Orville expelled from the training camp. The reason for the ouster was simple — he could not pin the shoulders of the ex-rodeo star.

Demand for Orville Brown by promoters around the country was furious after the press leaked out the story that Brown could not be pinned by the Golden Greek.

The nationwide tour lasted three years until Orville got his match with Londos at the Detroit Olympia March 15, 1935. It was a match that pitted two of the best wrestlers around, and ended in Orville's first pro defeat. Yet, the loss was questionable and a rematch was ordered. The two fought to a draw in their second match.

Shortly after the Londos-Brown match, the title changed hands from Londos to Danno O'Mahoney in Boston. O'Mahoney's title reign was short, as he lost the title to Dick Shikat.

On June 28, 1940 Brown won the National Wrestling Alliance title from Shikat in Columbus, Ohio. Brown held the championship all through the war years, and in 1949 a match was set up between he and the St. Louis-born Lou Thesz to determine the official champion of professional wrestling.

The match was set for Nov. 25 in St. Louis, but it never came off. Brown was injured in a near-fatal auto accident which ended his career.

He did not leave the wrestling scene, however. He became a promoter and an active member of the National Wrestling Alliance.

An active member of his community and a devoted sponsor of youth, this orphan who became a world champion wrestler will be missed by all his fellow wrestlers, promoters, fans and the people he came in contact with over the seven decades that he lived.

Now to the mailbag.

Dear Gorilla,

I have been a wrestling fan for many years. I remember when you first came to the Philadelphia area I never heard you say a word. Is it true you spoke very little English at that time? If so, I must say you speak very good English now.

W.M. Price
Philadelphia

When I first came to the WWF I had a manager named Wild Red Berry. I paid Red 25 percent of my earnings and did exactly what he asked of me, and one of those things was that I let him do all my talking for me. Believe me, I spoke English just as well in 1963 as I do today.

THE AWA- THE 1970's AND EARLY 1980's
By Larry LaNonymous

Looking back, one cannot help but lament how the AWA is now only a shell of what it once was, and while they have tried as best as possible to uphold some of the dignity of the sport badly tarnished in recent years, they just haven't been able to cut it. The AWA, however, has long been like a troublesome cockaroach. You spray it, you swat it, you step on it, yet it just won't die. This fact, in itself, brings about fond memories, as lesser men would have long since packed it in. Like all promotions, they have had their jerks and their nice guys. A list of some encounters with some of them follow.

DENNIS HILGARDT

Verne Gagne's go-fer and yes-man. Essentially one of the characteristic "small men trying to be important." He always got heat with me by keeping autograph seekers away from the wrestlers and parading around like a big shot. The man was a real pain and one of the few reasons I might think of for wishing the AWA to go down the tubes totally, if he is still around. Also reportedly tried to stop various Independents from running in AWA territory because "Gagne has the area sewn up." He seemed to forget this was the USA, land of free enterprise, not Russia.

NICK BOCKWINKLE

A truly classic act. Although a heel, he came on the air and talked rationally, but arrogantly, in a smirking, Buddy Rogers type of way. The son of wrestling's hit man, Warren Bockwinkle, Nick could presumedly tie someone in a knot for real too, if needed, a trait he learned from dad. Some of the Gagne-Bockwinkle bouts and the Stevens-Bockwinkle tag team matches in the 1970s were classics, but by the 1980's he seemed to slow down. He was courteous enough to fans, but seemed to want to stay clear of them. A dignified man with many traits current champions now lack.

VERNE GAGNE

Verne himself was always respectful to fans in the true babyface, I-love-you-all role, but what he really thought of them or said behind their backs may never come to light. Gossip said he was also a pretty heavy drinker, but he was always clean-cut and sober when in the public eye. Letting his son ride on his coat tails hurt his promotion quite a bit as putting Greg over was like giving wins to Don Knotts and asking the public to believe it. Also, as a businessman, he was not that well liked. In an old bulletin years ago, Jesse Ventura made the comment that he'd gone to the WWF because Gagne had treated him "like shit," a direct quote. Others reportedly felt the same and must even more so now, as he has so little talent still loyal to him. Curious point: did anyone ever see Verne bleed in a bout???

RAY STEVENS

A chain-smoking, stumpy little guy, who although a villain still signed autographs and posed for pictures. Liked cigars, but smoked cigarettes also. Would be regarded as too small to make it in this day and age of steroid wonders. Once a master of the leap off the top ropes. This was called his "Bombs Away!" Had a voice like a rusty gate.

NEXT ISSUE IN WT&N:

Don Gene Smith's "The Muchnick Years"
The prolific Vic Stanley's latest.
Original artwork, your letters, &
much, much more...

THE CRUSHER

Seeing him out there, "Da-da--da---duh---You'se bums is gonna get moidered and me and my cousin Da Bruiser's gonna drink a keg in yer memory," still sticks in my mind, because that stupid sounding thug voice was an exaggeration, like much of his tough guy role. I heard his normal voice while evesdropping once or twice. Hated as a heel and beloved as a roughhouse babyface, he remains one of my favorites from a bygone era. His best rival was Ray Stevens and with him he had many bloody brawls. It also did not look normal to see a Crusher bout in which at least someone didn't wind up bloody. His favorite holds were not holds at all, but a wild punch he called the Bolo and the use of a folded metal chair. There have been many other wrestlers who have used the name of Crusher since, but he will always be the greatest.

DAVID SCHULTZ

A man who either believes his own ring role after playing it so long or someone who doesn't have to act. Abrasive, troublemaking, hot tempered, obnoxious, and difficult. Reportedly, after leaving the AWA over a number of flaps, and prior to being kicked out of the WWF after the 20-20 incident, he gave the bookers many headaches included one time in California where he refused to team with Alexis Smirnoff because "I ain't gonna team with no Russian," which shows his mentality, as Smirnoff is Canadian and no more Russian than George Bush. For a while, he was hot stuff in the AWA. The fans really hated him. Only later did we find out, most of his associates behind the scenes did too. While his ability as a worker cannot be denied and one cannot help but lament his fading away, it's equally hard to feel sorry for him. he made enemies everywhere and his downfall was his own undoing. It was great though, to see him pop the 20-20 clown, and later throw water on crybaby Jim Wilson on the Morton Downey show. Again, it wasn't a work. That's the way the guy is.

OTTO WANZ

A good-natured, rotund Austrian man who unlike many foreigners really came from there. Very big and very slow, his style bombed in the USA, but he got the championship for a while for political favors. Wanz, a big time promoter in Europe, agreed to use AWA wrestlers in his area, if in turn, he'd be used here in the USA. He seemed to be the stereotyped, good-natured fat man though and although he couldn't wrestle his way out of a paper bag, he was very personable.

BRUISER

"Da Cousin to Da Crusher," equally hated as a villain, then beloved as a fan favorite. He did not stick around in AWA territory as much as Da Crusher, but went elsewhere with moderately successful promotional efforts of his own, first in Detroit in the 1970's, then in Indiana in the 1980's where in spite of his age, he didn't slow down. This cigar chomping, gravel voiced pit bull of a man was something to see in his prime. Like so many others though, he tried to stick around after his era passed and much of the golden memories were tarnished due to it. One of the highpoints was when he did a Blackjack Lanza imitation on tv, coming in with a fake mustache and cowboy hat, which was hilarious. Does anyone know, were Bruiser and Crusher really related?

LETTERS TO WT&N

I have enjoyed your columns in Arena Report and seem to feel as you do that most of what is passed off currently as "Pro Wrestling" doesn't measure up to what I knew and enjoyed when I was younger.

By the way, I met Al Costello a few years ago it was a delight to share stories and hear of his many, many adventures.

WILLIAM BURNETT
MEMPHIS, TENN.

I really enjoy your fanzine. I've been a fan since I saw my first card with Gorgeous George back in the early 1950's in Augusta, Georgia.

That circuit ran weekly in Augusta, Macon, Savannah, Columbus, Atlanta, Rome, and Athens, Georgia. I saw just about everyone: Gorgeous George, The Grahams, Wild Red Berry, Prof. Roy Shire, Freddie Blassie, Dizzy Davis, Chief Big Heart, The Dusek Bros.; the list goes on and on. Lots of blood, brawling, chairs etc.

I look forward to enjoying your work.

WILLIAM PERKINS
MARIETTA, GA.

Thanks for plugging Brains On Film (Editor's note: a wild, wild cable movie review show! Check it out- E.G.). Wrestling- Then & Now is super...I'll subscribe as soon as my wife gets her masters degree (Mo $, Mo $$!). I got married August 10 so $$ is low...my wife wants to buy stupid shit like dish towels, curtains, etc...WHY? There's too many fanzines, action figures, trading cards, etc...AARGH!

BROTHER GEORGE
MARANVILLE
LEXINGTON, KY.

From: Jason Conlan
452 Hamilton Rd.
Chermside, QLD.
4032, AUSTRALIA.

Dear Evan,

I have been a fan of wrestling for quite some time now, and when I saw the ad for your 'zine in "Factsheet Five" I had to write.

I'm glad to have found a 'zine dedicated to when wrestling was great... before the sport became full of stupid gimmicks, steroid inflated buffoons, animals (and not of the human kind) + hideously moronic freaks of nature (no offence intended to any body in the WWF)... back when actually being able to wrestle meant something.

I'm sorry that I haven't sent any money with the letter, but I'm hoping that you'll accept a copy of Headbutt #1 and this original sketch of Dusty as a trade for your latest issue. If not... well I hope you like them anyway...

YOURS TIL THE BOMBS DROP...

Jason

P.S Flair in the WWF? What is the world coming to?!?

P.T.

I always look forward to WT&N. I'm always on the look for old Pre-1960 tapes. Any ideas? I have many Japan and some old tapes including Red Berry and Sockeye McDonald vs. Wilbur Snyder and Fred Blassie, Broncko Nagurski vs. Jim Londos, Londos vs. Carnera and many others. I've traveled to Minneapolis to see the outstanding Lightnin' Kid vs. Jerry Lynn! Thanks for many great issues. MCW has really lost my interest and WWF never had it. Thanks again.

JAY ARBETMAN
OAK PARK, IL

(EDITOR'S NOTE: HEADBUTT is a beautifully drawn comic-book style sheet in the tradition of Bill Kunkel's Angle. Write to the address above. Highly recommended by yours truly!- E.G.)

Any information on a group (I think it was Continental something) that ran on NYC television on Sat. afternoons in the mid or late '60s?

I remember an announcer Lonny Starr who feuded with lead heel Lenny Montana and Montana would call Starr "Satchelmouth" & Starr would blow cigar smoke on Montana during matches. I also think Rocky Johnson held a belt but after that I'm lost.

MARTY WOLFSON
BATONNE, NJ

Fill the enclosed (blank) check for whatever your current rates are.

I don't have time to look it up as I am too pre-occupied (obsessed?) to check. The object of my time consumption is a holy grail to find and meet, or have dinner with or go on a cruise with Blair Brown.

I hope I don't have to fight you for her.

How about if I let you have Fabulous Moolah and we can double date?

HARRY WHITE
ST. LOUIS, MO.

(EDITOR'S NOTE: Harry, my fragile male ego does not allow me to date 60 year old women that are capable of taking me two out of three falls. By the way, just to keep your bookkeping in order- made check out for the sum of $10,000 which should extend your subscription until Summer 2037 A.D. Thanks so much!- E.G.)

A MESSAGE from OX BAKER

I'VE BEEN IN THE *RASSLIN'* BUSINESS FOR A *LONG* TIME, *AND* I'VE SEEN SOME *GREAT* KIDS COME ALONG...

"... BUT *NONE* ANY GREATER THAN..."

"THE **HOT SHOT!**"

BY PAT GABRIELE Sr. WITH MICHAEL PATTERSON AND OX BAKER

"HE RAN THROUGH HIS COMPETITION LIKE WATER THROUGH A SIEVE!"

"THIS KID HAD IT *ALL*, SPEED, POWER, *AND* CHARISMA!"

"HE COULDA BEEN THE *CHAMP!*"

UNFORTUNATLEY HE DIDNT HAVE THE BRAINS TO GO WITH THE OTHER STUFF!

"HE GOT HOOKED UP WITH... ...*DRUGS!!!*"

WHAT HAPPENED *MAN*, THAT *NEW KID* BEAT YA!

"NOW INSTEAD OF A CHAMP... *HE'S A CHUMP!*"

YOU'RE *NUTTIN'!*

NOW HE'S DOWN FOR THE *COUNT*... ...MAYBE FOR *GOOD!!!*

DON'T *RASSLE* WIT'AN OPPONENT THAT'LL *KILL YA!* STAY AWAY FROM *DRUGS!*